

## ABSTRACT

A diffractive security element (1) has a half-tone image (2) comprising diffractive structures in a reflection layer, which are embedded in a layer composite between a transparent embossing layer and a protective lacquer layer. The half-tone image (2) is divided into image elements (4) of at least one dimension less than 1 mm, wherein the surface of each image element (4) is divided up into a background field (5) and an image element pattern (6). The proportion of the image element pattern (6) to the surface of the image element (4) determines the surface brightness of the half-tone image (2) at the location (P) of the image element (4). The background field (5) has a first diffractive structure from which the image element pattern (6) differs by its light-modifying effect. Pattern strips of a width of up to 0.3 mm additionally extend over the surface of the half-tone image (2). The pattern strips occupy a small proportion of the surface of the background fields (5) and/or the image element patterns (6) and produce coloured strips (43) on the half-tone image (2).

(Figure 1)